

MARY BALDWIN COLLEGE

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This is the first of a series of sketches of Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Virginia, founded in 1842 as Augusta Female Seminary—the oldest educational institution in Virginia founded solely for women. Approaching the milestone of a centennial celebration, she pauses to take inventory of her heritage from the past and to show just cause for:

Her century of continuous existence

Her accredited standing among educational institutions

Her limited and carefully selected student body

Her balanced budget

Her freedom from debt for two generations

Her architecturally beautiful plant

Her home-like informal atmosphere

Her gracious social code

Her effective student government and honor system

Her sincere religious non-sectarian spirit

*Her body of 5,000 alumnae loyal to the ideals of their
alma mater, serving effectively their day and
generation*

MARY BALDWIN BULLETIN

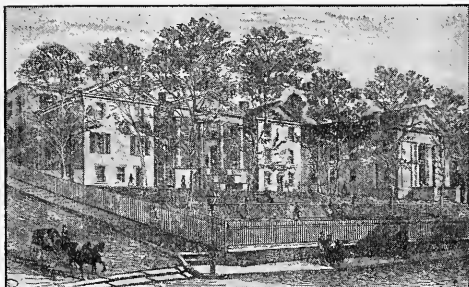
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Augusta Female Seminary

*A school
is born*

Unheralded, unsung, unostentatiously she was born, one of the group of seminaries which opened their doors to the girls and young women of the United States of America in the mid-nineteenth century. Hers, however, is a distinctive personality. She is the natural offspring of the union of a religious and cultural ideal with a practical educational idea. The ideal was that of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who had settled in the Valley of Virginia; the idea that of William Rufus Bailey, a devoted student of law and theology, an experienced educator and writer, who because of the rigors of the climate of his native New England changed his domicile to the more salubrious region of Staunton, county seat of Augusta County, Virginia.

*The
reason*

Fifteen men of faith and vision formed a self-perpetuating board of trustees, the guardians of the new-born Augusta Female Seminary. They adopted a constitution which contained the following statement of aim: "The founders of this Institution design it to afford the means of a thorough literary and Christian education to the female youth of this portion of our country."

Thus guided, in the fall of 1842 the first session convened in two rooms rented for the purpose, and demure little Virginia maids and young ladies came together with the desire to acquire from their principal, his wife, and two young lady daughters all that they had to offer: "First a solid and useful education, and then that which is ornamental so far as may be required."

*The first
catalogue*

No bulletins were printed, no advertising material was released until June of 1844 when, the sermon preached upon the laying of the cornerstone of the first building being published, an "exhibit" of the seminary was appended, "simply for the purpose of giving it a wide, gratuitous circulation."

Sixty young ladies were listed, at least a third of whom had passed examinations on the studies of the elementary class and were enrolled in the higher classes. The curriculum of the latter group included rhetoric, botany, chemistry, astronomy, algebra, geometry, history, natural philosophy, French, music, and Latin. No mere finishing school this, but a seminary, devoted, even in that day, *to the higher education of women.*

*Educational
aim*

The following extract from Mr. Bailey's "Letters to Daughters at School" gives his philosophy of "female education:"

"The place which the female occupies in society, and the influence she exerts, requires the most complete moral and intellectual education to prepare her for her duties. She may not only 'learn to read, and write, and cipher,' but she ought to have her mind and character formed by whatever can adorn or give strength to the intellect. She has a whole life to live—why not spend it rationally? The mind must think. Why may she not as well be wise as frivolous? Why may she not as well be devoted to literature as to fashion?"

First building During the first year of her life the little seminary twice outgrew her rented quarters. Whereupon the trustees, her natural guardians, pledged themselves to be personally responsible for the sum necessary to erect a suitable and adequate building. The cornerstone was laid with appropriate ceremonies at the end of the second session. The building subsequently erected stands today, almost a century thereafter, the central building of the college which is granddaughter of that seminary, sounding the architectural keynote for the entire college plant, memorializing the faith and generosity of the first board of trustees and the pure taste and careful workmanship of the builders.

The school is incorporated On January 30, 1845, the Legislature of Virginia passed an act incorporating Augusta Female Seminary.

Early problems For seven years the founder and principal watched over his dream-child; then the exigency of failing health demanded that he resign from the school and leave it to become the concern of the often perplexed but always faithful board of trustees.

The reports of this body during the next fourteen years show a series of appointments, followed in each case by polite but firm resignations. Five successive men presided over the school rooms. Some of them seemed to find the female mind *en masse* surprisingly untractable; others were oppressed by the practical difficulties of making ends meet when all expenses must be met and all salaries paid from the modest fees collected from a fluctuating body of students.

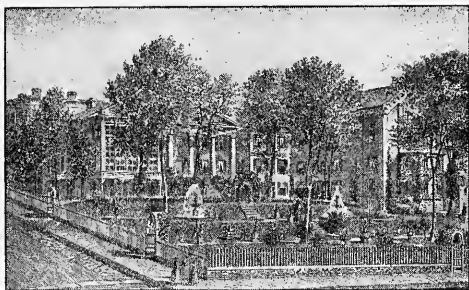
The crisis By the summer of 1863 the town of Staunton had put on the vesture of war. The Virginia and Wesleyan Female Institutes had been suspended and their buildings turned into Confederate hospitals.

Just across from the stately edifice of the Augusta Female Seminary stood the arsenal, where ammunition and several cannon were kept, guarded by soldiers.

Before the Seminary could open its next session the trustees must needs secure a new principal, as valiant as the times demanded. Men were at a premium; the South had need of her men for a task more important than that of supervising the education of female minds. The Seminary building was almost unfurnished; there was no furniture for sale in Staunton; and it was impossible to secure it elsewhere. All the other schools in Staunton and in fact many of the schools in Virginia and the far South had been closed. War left little money for education, and travel was both difficult and dangerous.

Then it was that the secretary of the board of trustees, bearing the problem of the Seminary constantly on his mind and heart, became aware of the unusual ability of two women of his acquaintance. The one was his sister-in-law, a born housekeeper and homemaker. The other was Miss Mary Julia Baldwin. An orphan since childhood, she had lived with her maternal grandparents until their death and had at an early age become known in the community for her piety and good works, for her exceptional ability as a teacher, and for the charm which emanated from her person in spite of the fact that one side of her otherwise comely face was marred by a paralyzed nerve. As of Esther of old it might be said of Miss Baldwin: "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"





Augusta Female Seminary after 1870

Re-birth

Born again in the courageous hearts of two Southern women the school grew in strength even as it struggled to exist. The elder of the two ladies, Miss Agnes McClung, was the matron. She managed the housekeeping, and, with the help of her mother ("Grandma" to the girls), made a home for all of them. Mary Julia Baldwin, younger than her colleague, was the principal, the educator, in fact the very soul of the little seminary.

When the session opened on October 1, 1863, twenty-two boarding students had been enrolled and provided for. Most of them slept upon beds which had but recently stood in the homes of the kindly women of Staunton. The dining tables were set with unmatched china and cutlery from the same sources; and there were scarcely two chairs of the same size or kind. But the principals had brought with them the furnishings for their own chambers, to which home-like rooms the girls were frequently invited, and a spirit of peace and contentment dwelt in this distinctly female atmosphere.

War-time artifice

Devotion to their task fostered in these two ladies a shrewd business judgment. Tuition fees were paid in flour (\$25 a barrel), bacon (\$1 a pound), corn meal, beef, potatoes, sorghum molasses, and wood. In the later days of the war, Miss Baldwin, wishing to purchase a piano and knowing the enormous premium then paid on State coupon bonds, sent one-half her entire inheritance, two thousand-dollar State bonds, by a bank cashier going to Richmond. She received in return three thousand two hundred dollars in registered bonds, and enough money in Confederate notes to purchase the coveted piano at \$900!

Staunton was a depot for army supplies and was occupied many times by each army. Whenever the cry, "The Yankees are coming," was heard, the girls hastened to hide the provisions: cordwood was carried into the basement, hams were hidden in desks, flour barrels were draped in crinoline petticoats and disguised as dressing tables. The Principal meanwhile would graciously show the Yankee officers in and out of the rooms and passages "by such devious routes that they became confused and tired and ready to seek rest and refreshment elsewhere."

Curriculum

Mary Julia Baldwin had herself graduated from Augusta Female Seminary when she was a girl in her teens, receiving with the little white satin diploma words of commendation from Dr. Bailey, her principal and her teacher. She had been an apt pupil, had shared her teacher's love of learning, and continued to explore the paths of knowledge into which he had directed her. When called to formulate a course of study for her alma mater, she planned at once not only a preparatory and an intermediate department, but a collegiate department as well. In determining the curriculum for the latter she was counseled by Dr. W. H. McGuffey, of "McGuffey's Reader" fame, who came over from the University of Virginia to confer with her. According to an old alumnae record, "Many

persons regarded her standard as beyond the mental capacity of women." Even Dr. McGuffey cautioned his ambitious young colleague that she was establishing too high a standard in her course of study ever to make Augusta Female Seminary a popular institution. All catalogues, therefore, conscientiously carried the following notices:

"The plan of instruction in this department is that of the University of Virginia, modified only so far as to adapt it to the peculiar requisites of female education. As the course of study is extensive, and thorough scholarship is required, comparatively few pupils remain in the Institution a sufficient time to become full graduates."

Individual care As was true of many of the female seminaries of New England, so it was with this Virginia school, much attention was given to the individual student, "to her health, her habits, her intellectual improvement and her moral and religious state." Each catalogue contained either the following or similar statements:

Health "Testimony of all physicians who have inspected the chambers is that they are well ventilated, properly heated, and furnished with everything essential to health and comfort. In proof of the healthfulness of the climate and the great care bestowed upon the pupils, but two cases of severe sickness have occurred during the ten years in which the present Principal has had charge of the Institution."

Physical education "A judicious system of Calisthenics, under the supervision of Professor Thomas V. Carr and his sister," was introduced into the curriculum at an early date. Such a course was frowned upon by many educators as being "too strenuous for the female frame," but the young ladies of Augusta Female Seminary did not find it so.

Rewards

Rewards for effort and attainment were many.

Prizes were given for neatness and order, for diligence and obedience, for perfect recitations, and for the greatest improvement in each subject studied in the preparatory and intermediate departments. Gold medals were the rewards in the music department. However, in the collegiate department a student was rewarded only by a Certificate of Proficiency when she had completed satisfactorily the course in one of the "schools," of which there were seven. "When she has completed the course and has received Certificates of Proficiency in all the schools, she is entitled to a Diploma as a full Graduate."

Religious influence

Principals and teachers labored and taught and prayed that the girlish hearts entrusted to their care might gain in spiritual grace and love.

Attendance upon the public worship at the Presbyterian church was required, though it was carefully stated in the catalogue, "that while the Principal and her assistants are solicitous to bring their pupils under the influence of evangelical religion, no attempt is permitted to imbue their minds with sectarian prejudice." Miss Baldwin had frequent meetings with her girls for prayer and meditation, and the remembrance of the sincerity of her love for their souls remained with them always, even though as students their attention had sometimes wavered during prayers.

Prayer

In Miss Baldwin's Bible was found the following petition which this consecrated teacher must often have sent up to her Maker: "O God, let them not go back to their homes worse than when they came. Here they will be tempted many times. Far away from home and from their fathers and mothers, help them to shun the evil and choose the good."

Gentlemen callers

Students were surrounded with "all the influences of a refined home circle that they might be fitted for the social duties of life," but this circle contained only those fortunate men who could claim to be fathers, brothers, uncles, or in exceptional cases, cousins. Other men callers were not admitted unless they bore a letter of introduction and permission from the parents of the young lady on whom they wished to call. Having been admitted, they paid their call in the presence of the Principal or one of her associates. Nevertheless, romances somehow budded and bloomed in the staid seminary parlors, for by devious and often disingenuous devices, love found its way. President Woodrow Wilson, in the introduction to his address made from the front portico of Mary Baldwin in December, 1912, recalled the trepidation with which he had mounted the steps to the same portico and knocked at the door to the parlors when, a student at the University of Virginia, he had ventured to call upon his young cousin, Miss Woodrow, then a student in Mary Baldwin Seminary.

Personnel

Miss Baldwin chose her "assistants," as she called them, wisely. She secured "accomplished specialists," men as well as women, and gave them full authority in their class rooms. They were paid what were considered generous salaries and were treated with consideration and respect. It was impossible for a faculty member to fail to catch the spirit of unselfish, self-effacing service which was manifest in Miss Baldwin's devotion to her task of helping each girl to do her best.

Growth in physical plant

Even before the days of reconstruction were past, Augusta Female Seminary was growing apace. Her students came from all sections of the United States and several foreign countries. The one building, even after considerable enlargement, could not house the school; so in 1871 three buildings were added, all of which are in use today. One of them was the old building of the

First Presbyterian Church, made famous by the fact that Woodrow Wilson, born in the manse a block from the Seminary, was there baptized. His sister was a pupil of the school, of which his father wrote in 1866: "Institutions for the instruction of young ladies abound throughout the country, and there may be others as deserving of public confidence as this; *but I have never known such a School.* It is as near perfection in my judgment as it is possible for human wisdom to make it."

Financial When Miss Baldwin and Miss McClung had the courage to accept the responsibility of the Seminary, the trustees offered them no salary and made no provision for maintenance of the school, for the Seminary had no funds. The ladies were simply authorized to use the building and were directed to make their own financial arrangements. Miss Baldwin put into the school an initial investment of about \$4,000, her entire personal fortune. From this meager beginning she and Miss McClung proceeded to equip the institution, to finance its growing needs, and gradually to build up a substantial endowment—at that time the personal property of Miss McClung and Miss Baldwin.

When the former died her share in the school was left to Miss Baldwin. On the death of Miss Baldwin in 1897, this "endowment" had grown to about \$125,000, and except for \$21,000 in religious bequests, it was left by her to the Seminary intact. This money had been realized from the school in a day (alas, now gone forever) when educational institutions could be profit-making, and had been secured to it by the wise investments of Miss Baldwin and her helper, Mr. William Wayt King.

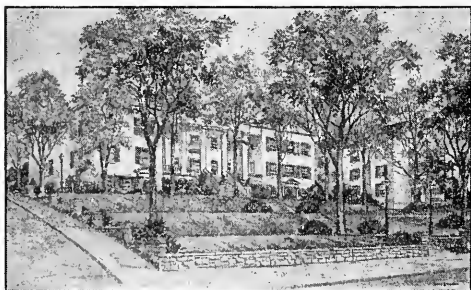
*Death of
Miss
Baldwin* Miss Mary Julia Baldwin came to Augusta Female Seminary at the age of thirty-four. She died in service there in 1897 at the age of sixty-eight. The school was her life. She showered upon it the affection that a godly mother gives her children, and

she was loved in return with a devotion accorded only to rare souls. Two years before her death the trustees gave fitting expression to their appreciation of Miss Baldwin's consecration of her life to the school by changing its name from Augusta Female Seminary to Mary Baldwin Seminary.

"Let her own works praise her" Among the "testimonials" included in the catalogue for 1896-'97, the last one prepared during Miss Baldwin's life, we find the following statement by an authority in the field of education: "Now, as in the past, Miss Baldwin is continually sending forth her pupils, trained to be cultivated ladies—ladies prepared by mental and moral discipline to do a work in the world. Nothing better could be said."

It is indeed true. At a time when the country as a whole and the South in particular was in need of leadership, Miss Baldwin's girls accepted their responsibilities as leaders in the fields of education, religion, civic affairs, and social problems, as well as in homemaking and the arts, and served so effectively that their service and influence are continuing into the present day. The quality of their lives and service has brought honor to the woman whose ideals inspired them and to the institution which bears her name.





Main Building—Mary Baldwin College

Permanence That Mary Baldwin Seminary could survive the loss of Miss Baldwin's person was due not only to the generosity of her bequest, and the faithfulness of her associates and successors, but above all to the immortality of her ideals.

During Miss Baldwin's term as Principal, the institution had been virtually her school. The trustees, who had met infrequently, their only business that of filling vacancies on the Board, now found themselves in the responsible position of "devisees and residuary legatees" of a considerable sum of money with which Miss Baldwin hoped to endow and perpetuate the ideals of woman's education to which she had consecrated her life.

Administrative succession An Executive Committee of five trustees was appointed to act as advisers in the conduct of the school. It was stated in a notice sent to all patrons: "No changes are possible and happily none are desirable. The Trustees and Executors acting jointly must carry out Miss Baldwin's plans and contracts with the same

splendid corps of officers, teachers, and employees, and the same appliances as before."

Miss Ella Clare Weimar, Miss Baldwin's assistant since 1889, was appointed Principal *pro tem* and Mr. W. W. King, formerly Miss Baldwin's secretary and general assistant, became Business Manager. Miss Weimar was subsequently elected Principal and held this position until her failing health made it necessary for her to resign.

After Miss Weimar's resignation, Miss Marianna P. Higgins, formerly a member of the English faculty, was made Principal. She remained in this position until 1923 when, having established the four-year college course, she became the Dean of the College, of which Rev. A. M. Fraser, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Staunton, was made President.

Each of these administrators was faithful and conscientious in the performance of every task, wholly devoted to the duties of office.

Mr. King Mr. King remained Business Manager for forty years. He knew and helped to solve the financial problems of four administrations. He was judicious in his investments and business-like in his collections. Yet he had the love of students and patrons. Far from being the "hard-hearted business man," he was a friend to every girl who came to the school. He dedicated his life to assuring the future of the school he loved and graced his position, a faithful steward of the monies entrusted to him. This wise investment of funds was necessary for the very life of the Seminary and forms the nucleus of the endowment of Mary Baldwin College.

Physical plant A part of the funds in hand, augmented by savings of Mr. King's business administration, was wisely expended during the decade following Miss Baldwin's death in an extensive building program. One dormitory was renovated and enlarged and a second was built.

The expanding curriculum necessitated the erection of a three-story Academic building containing the library, class rooms, and laboratories, as well as music practice rooms. The Seminary in that day had just cause to be proud of its physical plant, "consisting of eight adequately and attractively furnished buildings located on one of the beautiful hills for which Staunton is noted."

Students

Mary Baldwin Seminary found little advertising necessary. Women who had been Miss Baldwin's girls in the days when the school was known as Augusta Female Seminary sent their daughters, that their minds and hearts might there be enriched. Men and women born in Virginia sent their daughters to the Seminary that they might there acquire the charm of true Virginia ladies. Sisters of students at Staunton Military Academy, Virginia Military Institute, Washington and Lee University, and the University of Virginia were entrusted to the kindly chaperonage of the Seminary parlors. Pleased patrons sang the praises of the school and slept soundly at night secure in the knowledge that their daughters were as free from harm and danger of mind, body, and soul as they would have been in their own homes.

Educational develop- ment

With the turn of the century the education of women in America entered on a new day. Mary Baldwin Seminary was keenly aware of the change and made provision for the "new woman" by expanding her curriculum in accordance with the educational philosophy of the time. In 1916 "the special course covering three years of college work" was given recognition by the Virginia State Board of Education, and Mary Baldwin was placed on the list of accredited Junior Colleges. In 1923 the college course was again expanded and Mary Baldwin had become a four-year college.

During all this time the preparatory department had continued to be an integral part of the school. But as the college

course developed, it became more and more apparent that the efficiency of both departments was being decreased by their close proximity. When this situation became known, friends of the preparatory school, led by the Board of Trustees and the people of Staunton, set to work to find the means for maintaining the preparatory department in the Seminary buildings and for erecting a new home for the college. Not until insurmountable obstacles proved this course inexpedient was it abandoned. During this period certain financial gifts were made to the school by the alumnae and citizens of Staunton. These now constitute a part of the endowment of the college.

The session of 1928-1929 was the last session of the preparatory department. Since September, 1929, only young ladies who have already acquired diplomas of high school grade have been admitted to the fellowship that is honored by the name *Mary Baldwin*.

Thus the educational program kept pace with the times, retaining always its emphasis upon thoroughness and the satisfactions and disciplines of sound scholarship.

A new crisis The college course as such had had a natural development. Having had its origin in the "higher classes" organized by Dr. Bailey in the Augusta Female Seminary, it had been interpreted by Miss Baldwin in her "University Course," by Miss Weimar in the junior college course, and by Dr. Fraser and Miss Higgins in the four-year college course. It remained for the college to expand to meet the requirements of the accrediting agencies now that expansion was possible.

New leadership In 1929 the trustees secured the services of an experienced educator, Dr. L. Wilson Jarman, to whom, as president, they gave their utmost confidence and support. Under his leadership, the faculty, curriculum, library, physical plant, and administration were

developed to conform to the standards of modern educational procedure. In the session of 1931-'32 Mary Baldwin College was formally accredited and admitted into the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In the session of 1938-'39 she has been placed on the accepted list of the Association of American Universities, which is the highest possible accreditation.

Intangibles Blessed with a succession of faithful administrators, with a wide patronage, with a beautiful plant, with high standards of educational efficiency, Mary Baldwin Seminary had recognized the fact that more valuable than any other gift with which she was endowed was the gift of ideals for living—those intangibles which are not limited by time, which need only to be re-interpreted by each group of administrators for each student generation.

Miss Baldwin, because of her utter devotion to the school, because of the purity of her personal life, because of the earnestness of her Christian faith, because of her high standard of intellectual attainment, embodied these ideals to a unique degree.

In her renaissance Mary Baldwin College seeks always to re-interpret and perpetuate the ideals of Mary Julia Baldwin in every phase of her being. In the remodeling and redecoration of the physical plant, in the expanding of the educational program, in the organization of student government and the honor system, in the sincere religious spirit of her faculty and administrators, in her effort to lead her students into the Christian way of life, she recognizes these ideals.

It is upon high idealism and faithful stewardship that the right to permanence of an educational institution such as Mary Baldwin finally depends.

Alma Mater

"Thou wast born of dreams, Mary Baldwin, Mary Bladwin,
Woman's dreams of love and true desire;
Conqueror's dreams with passion's ardor glowing,
Caught from Truth's undying, pure white fire.

Thou wast built of dreams, Mary Baldwin, Mary Baldwin,
Dreams of faith, the dreams of early dawn.
Thou shalt live beyond time's farthest limit:
Dreams shall last when walls of stone are gone.

Born to live, to perish never,
To inspire to high endeavor,
To uphold that light forever,
Mary Baldwin."

Born of dreams, built of dreams, Mary Baldwin College, daughter of Mary Baldwin Seminary, granddaughter of Augusta Female Seminary, approaches the end of her first century of life. Her heritage is a goodly one; what will her future be?

Mary Baldwin's dream is a growing dream; it must be allowed to grow freely, unhampered by material restrictions.

Mary Baldwin's dream is a developing dream; it must be allowed to reach a fulfillment that is commensurate with the requirements of each student generation.

She needs no new dream for the future, no new purpose, no new ideal. Her ideal of Christian education is a timeless one, as timeless as the heart of woman. Unchanged by the changing manners and customs of succeeding generations, it can never be outmoded.

But the outward and visible sign of the college, the physical habitat in which ideals must live and work, is not timeless. The manner of living, the procedures of education, the processes of student life change with each generation and make insistent demands beyond the physical equipment of an earlier day.

Not a new dream, but the realization of the dream of her founder, Dr. William Rufus Bailey, the life dream of Miss Mary Julia Baldwin, the dream of every person whose life has been touched by the ideals of Christian living which are given permanence in this institution—this is the challenge to the practical generosity of every alumna and friend of Mary Baldwin, a challenge to make adequate preparation for her second century of educational service.



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